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# Fall 2011, Confucius Institute's First Year... A Dynamic Chinese Partner for UNH and the State of NH

Center for International Education

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The UNH Center for International Education Newsletter

Fall 2011

## CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE'S FIRST YEAR... A DYNAMIC CHINESE PARTNER FOR UNH AND THE STATE OF NH

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*Confucius Institute co-directors Yige Wang (left) and Yuexing Xu (right) and students inside the Confucius Temple near Chengdu University*

The distance between China and NH no longer seems quite as far...thanks not only to the increasing number of Chinese students on campus (see Navitas article) but also because of the exciting programs of the [Confucius Institute](#), which started offering Chinese language and culture courses on and off campus last year. Spring 2009 is when things actually began. During that semester, the President's Office, the Provost's Office and the College of Liberal Arts embarked on a long and competitive process to establish a Confucius Institute (CI), based here at UNH. Throughout the U.S. there are now about 80 CIs, which are funded by the Chinese government in order to create knowledge and understanding about China and build bridges with countries and peoples around the world. Last year, the effort was successful: UNH established the Institute on campus with Yige Wang and Yuexing Xu as co-directors and an exciting joint program with Chengdu University in Sichuan province. All told, Chengdu University has sent six teachers, certified by the

Confucius Headquarters in Beijing. With the help of these new teachers, UNH is now able to offer many more Chinese courses. This semester, for example, approximately 150 students are learning Chinese language and culture in 10 classes at UNH, both in Durham and Manchester. Since the arrival of CI to campus, over 300 UNH students have benefitted from these classes, and the number is expected to grow each year.

Integral to the CI-UNH mission is bringing Chinese language-learning opportunities to young people of all ages. Accordingly, one of the classes offered this semester in Manchester is exclusively for high school students. To broaden this effort, CI is helping school districts in Oyster River, Portsmouth and Manchester apply for 'Confucius Classrooms.' Through this initiative, each of these schools will receive free Chinese language instruction and have a relationship with a sister school in China, opening interesting opportunities for two-way enrichment and student and faculty exchanges. This is a win-win for China and for the state of NH — helping K-12 students develop an interest in the language and culture of China, one that hopefully will grow stronger as

learners become college students and adults. To that end, CI also hopes to offer an activity/cognitive-based Chinese language program to pre-elementary students at the UNH Child Development Center, to start children on the path of connection and familiarity with China at the youngest possible age.

CI also funds many Chinese language- and culture-related activities, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, a Chinese language contest, as well as local Chinese language teacher training. Visit the [CI website](#) for upcoming campus events.

In addition to being an active presence on campus and statewide, the Confucius Institute creates possibilities for international exchange, scholarship and professional development. UNH students can take advantage of grants to learn Chinese at Chengdu University: This past summer, six students received Confucius Institute scholarships to study and travel for 3 weeks in China, as part of an eye-opening program that left a profound impression on students and their Chinese hosts. This program and CI's financial support will continue in subsequent summers.

It is not only current UNH students who are going abroad: Joshua Richards, a 2011 graduate in International Affairs/Anthropology/Asian Studies, was thrilled to be invited to Chengdu University to teach English as a Second Language for the academic year. This is part of the reciprocal benefits of the Confucius partnership. Joshua is the first UNH student to live and work at Chengdu University, and he is pleased to have access to free Chinese language classes so he can continue to advance his language skills. Later this year, two UNH faculty members will visit Chengdu to offer seminars and 16 Chengdu University administrators will travel to UNH for short trainings, continuing the exchange of scholars and culture. To facilitate these exchanges and the integration of language and culture learning, CI's Co-director Yige Wang liaises with the Asian Studies Department and the NH Department of State.



*Joshua Richards at Chengdu University*

Lastly, but importantly, UNH's Center for International Education and College of Liberal Arts are working with CI to develop a semester-long Chinese language program at Chengdu University. CI and the Center will offer scholarships for this exciting longer-term immersion in China, which is targeted to pilot in AY 2012-13.